

# Career Fairs and Transition in Rural Areas

Stacey Dutton

Transition Programs Field Representative

Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)

# Transition Fairs



# Transition Fairs Held at Oklahoma Schools

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Transition Fairs are a fantastic way for families, teachers, and students to learn about resources and programs available for students with disabilities.

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DRS and OU Pre-Employment Transition Services have combined forces in Oklahoma to help schools plan transition fairs in their community.

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These fairs can be held virtually or in person at a time most convenient for the school and its attendees.

# POTENTIAL TRANSITION FAIR INTEREST AREAS OR THEMES

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Vocational Services

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Assistance with college services, applications, and test preparation

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IEP support

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Adult living options

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Coordination with other families

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Financial services and benefits including social security

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Community organizations such as Special Olympics

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Financial aide/ scholarships

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Post-Secondary Options

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Guardianship and other legal topics

# Involve Students

- Include students in the planning process.
- Prior to the event such as contacting vendors, making flyers, handing out flyers, set up tables, and making signs.
- During the event such as welcomer, serve snacks and waters to vendors, assist with carrying in materials, man the sign-in table, direct people where to go, and introduce speakers.
- If your students take visible roles at these and other public events, community members will see the contributions of people with disabilities firsthand. Encourage high-visibility student participation in a number of community activities.

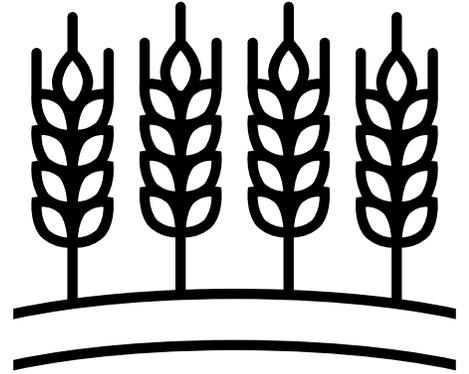
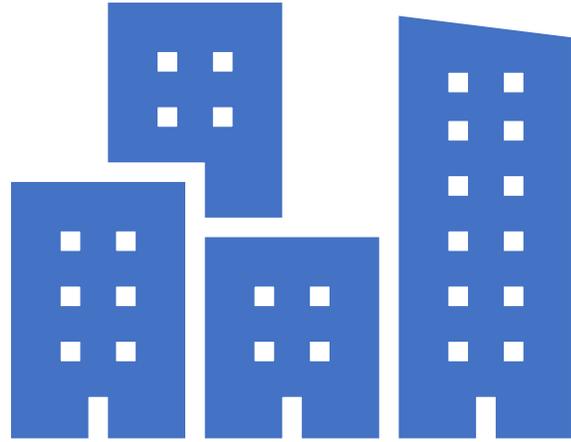
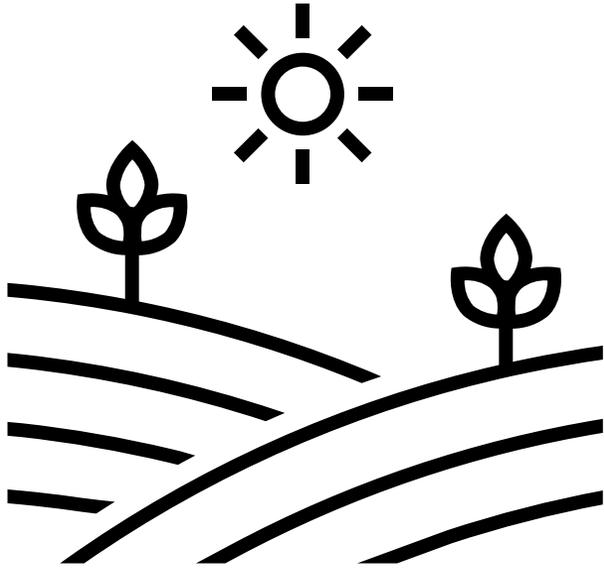
**<https://blog.brookespublishing.com/11-ways-to-promote-community-support-for-students-with-disabilities/>**

# Additional Thoughts and Ideas

- Include Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) - Transition Services and OU Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to assist with the planning of the event.
- Provide a location that will include tables and chairs, and/or table cloths. This can be a school library, cafeteria, gym, or auditorium.
- Make the event accessible. Include wheelchair access, interpreters, and closed-captioning.
- Make it simple and easy for parents to understand what they are coming to.
- Ask Special Education teachers and/or student associations such as Student Council to assist with watching children needing supervision so that parents can focus during the event.

# Additional Thoughts and Ideas (2)

- Ask some of the community resources most important to your students and their families to speak about their services.
- It may be difficult and intimidating to ask questions at a table when you don't know anything about the vendor. Sometimes it's better to sit and listen before going to the tables.
- Ask school sports, community resources, etc to provide door prizes for attendees.
- Ask community for donations of food for drinks, snacks, or dinner.



# Rural Transition

# Three Crucial Predictors of Transition Success – Anywhere!

David Test, National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT)

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**Student  
Involvement in  
their own IEP  
Process**



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**Work-Based  
Learning  
(Experiences)**



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**Interagency  
Collaboration**

# Overcoming Struggles & Perceived Barriers



## Finding work.

Think outside the box and do an environmental scan of what opportunities are in your school and community!

Students can work at school during school hours or with janitorial staff after school. What other school positions can you think of in your school or district?

Local agencies, businesses, and community programs need to be made aware of transition programs for community participation and employment in their area, be encouraged to take a chance, and offer opportunities to students. It's a win-win situation.



## Transportation.

Students can make arrangements to be picked up after work by parents or guardians unless they drive themselves.

Utilize transportation going to and from career tech centers or other school/district activities.

School transportation options can be included as part of the IEP process, but students should begin learning/using other options they will have access to as adults.

Community transportation options for urban, rural and tribal service areas.

# Overcoming Struggles & Perceived Barriers



## Parental Support & Understanding.

Parent understanding of secondary transition opportunities and processes can be improved with conversations beginning as early as elementary school.

Talk about transition early and often!

Facilitate the transition provider application and/or participation processes for students and their families (i.e. Pre-ETS, Career Tech, Developmental Disability Services/DDS, DRS).



## Collaboration with Transition Agencies & Providers.

Building bonds and establishing relationships with transition agencies and providers in your area is crucial!

Find out the names of your people and begin the conversation!

Respond when transition agencies and providers initiate the conversation with you or your staff.

Put them in your e-mail and phone contact lists.

Participate in common professional development on transition (i.e. Oklahoma Transition Institute, Project SEARCH).

Participate on your Regional Transition Team.

# BIG JOBS in Small Towns:

## Discovering Job Opportunities in Rural Areas

(Slides adapted from 5 Opportunities for BIG JOBS IN SMALL TOWNS presentation by Jennifer Wilson, [teachermindstroll@gmail.com](mailto:teachermindstroll@gmail.com) or TeacherMindStroll on Facebook)

- **RURAL MINDSET STRATEGIES:**

- Capitalize on what's available AND do an “environmental scan” of your school and community.
- Look for hidden work experience/work placement opportunities.
- Develop opportunities for job exploration, job shadowing, work placement, and hands-on career experiences including entrepreneurial school-based businesses and online work opportunities.

# BIG JOBS in Small Towns:

## Discovering Job Opportunities in Rural Areas

- **BENEFITS OF SMALL and/or RURAL COMMUNITIES:**
  - Lower cost of living than larger or more suburban areas
  - Familiarity: People, Places, Experiences
  - Family
  - Community
  - Simplicity of navigation
  - Most rural communities have a café, City Hall, community center/nutrition center, convenience store/gas station, church, park, post office, school...

# **BIG JOBS in Small Towns:**

## **Job Opportunities in Small Towns & Rural Areas**

- **Barber/Hairstylist**
- **Bookkeeper**
- **Caterer/Baker**
- **Coffee Shop Owner**
- **Cook/ Chef**
- **Custodial (any setting)**
- **Dental Assistant**
- **Electrical/HVAC/Plumbing**
- **Entrepreneur**
- **Food Service**
- **Freelancer - part-time gigs**
- **Handyman**
- **Healthcare: RN, LPN, CNA, Home Health, Clinics**
- **Hospitality**
- **Pet Care Provider**
- **Pharmacy Technician**
- **Photographer**
- **Real Estate Agent**
- **Receptionist**
- **Veterinary Assistant**
- **Bank Teller**
- **Delivery Driver**
- **Retail**

# BIG JOBS in Small Towns: 6 Ways to Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLEs)

## #1 JOB SHADOWING

- **JOB SHADOWING EXPLAINED:**

- A Job Shadow is a worksite experience during which an individual spends time with an employee observing daily activities and asking questions about the job and industry.
- Individuals participate before, during, and after the Job Shadow to help them understand and reflect on what is learned at the worksite.
- The Job Shadow allows the individual to determine career compatibility and responsibilities.

- **BENEFITS OF JOB SHADOWING:**

- Authentic experience
- Fully supervised
- Low input requirements from host site
- Short term - allows for students a quick exit if the job is not a good fit
- Can be repeated with different jobs/job sites in high school or transition programs

# BIG JOBS in Small Towns: 6 Ways to WBLEs

## #2 SCHOOL DISTRICT WORK EXPERIENCE

- **SCHOOL/DISTRICT WORK EXPERIENCES:**
  - Cafeteria/Food Service/Concessions/Culinary Arts
  - Bus Barn/Transportation/Automotive or similar work
  - Maintenance/Repair/Construction
  - Custodial/Janitorial
  - Teacher Assistant/Paraprofessional or Childcare
  - Agricultural/Landscaping/Grounds Maintenance
  - Business/Clerical/Office/Print Shop
  - IT/Computer Department
  - Healthcare - School Nurse/ Athletic Trainers
  - Library
  - Other suggestions???

# BIG JOBS in Small Towns: 6 Ways to WBLEs

## #2 SCHOOL DISTRICT WORK EXPERIENCE

### • **SCHOOL/DISTRICT WORK EXPERIENCE SUCCESSES:**

- **CAFETERIA** - Student with significant needs, non-verbal, working in cafeteria setting, learned to cleaning tables with dots and cleaning windows with dots; all skills can be practiced and transferred to other settings with the goal being to increase independence, offer inclusive opportunities, and fade supports.
- **CLERICAL/OFFICE** – Student worked as a Teacher Assistant/Office Assistant and was supported to learn office duties such as answering the phone, transferring calls, making copies, sending faxes; during her senior year student was hired to work at a local insurance office to work as office support; due to the school-based work experience, she had the basic training and experience of navigating the office and handling work related tasks.
- **TRANSPORTATION** – Students aged 18+ serve as bus monitors, learning to monitor students entering/exiting bus and assisting with needs of special services students.

# BIG JOBS in Small Towns: 6 Ways to WBLEs

## #3 COMMUNITY WORK EXPERIENCE

- **COMMUNITY WORK EXPERIENCES:**

- Café, Fast Food or Other Restaurant
- Convenience Store/Gas Station
- Maintenance/Repair/Construction
- Custodial/Janitorial (any setting)
- Childcare/Daycare/Head Start
- Agricultural/Co-op/Landscaping/Lawn Maintenance
- Business/Clerical/Office/Print Shop
- IT/Computer Department
- Healthcare/Clinic, Hospital, Doctor's Office
- City Hall, Community, Nutrition or Senior Center
- Library
- Do a quick “environmental scan” of your small, rural community...
- Other suggestions???

# BIG JOBS in Small Towns: 6 Ways to WBLEs

## #3 COMMUNITY WORK EXPERIENCE

### • **COMMUNITY WORK EXPERIENCE SUCCESS:**

- **DAYCARE** - Student with intellectual disabilities, very limited reading ability, working in a local daycare setting, initially with supports with in the “baby” and toddler rooms, learned basic daily and mealtime routines; gained a level of independence that daycare suggested student take the test to become certified and gain employment upon exiting school; test has a read aloud option, which allowed the student to meet criteria to pass test for certificate; upon exit, was offered a job placement and student transitioned to adult rehabilitation services to continue with supports to ensure employability.

### • **RESOURCE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED WORK EXPERIENCES:**

- **NTACT: The Collaborative** <https://transitionta.org/>
  - Create an account
  - Go to: <https://transitionta.org/community-partnership-guide/> for NTACT’s document entitled **A Guide to Developing School-Community-Business Partnerships**

# BIG JOBS in Small Towns: 6 Ways to WBLEs

## #4 SCHOOL-BASED ENTERPRISES

- **Agricultural Efforts**

- Greenhouse
- Beekeeping
- Specialty Products

- **Creative Efforts**

- T-Shirt Printing
- Posters/Sign Making
- Greeting Cards
- Crafts/Current Trends

- **Business Efforts**

- Coffee Shop/ Bar/Cart
- “School Store”
- Pep/School Mascot Products (buttons, hats, clothing, bracelets, etc.)
- Clothes Closet/Thrift Store
- After-School Daycare
- Car Detailing
- Laundromat Service

# BIG JOBS in Small Towns: 6 Ways to WBLEs

## #4 SCHOOL-BASED ENTERPRISES

- **Important Considerations**

- Startup Funds
- Location/Logistics
- Revenue Accounting (Activity Fund)
- Sales Tax
- Competitive Businesses

- **Resource for School-Based Enterprises**

- Career Z Challenge for WBL grant opportunity – open until June 7, 2023
- NTACT: The Collaborative at <https://transitionta.org/>
  - Create an account
  - Go to: <https://transitionta.org/school-based-enterprise/> for the NTACT School-based Enterprise Toolkit

# BIG JOBS in Small Towns: 6 Ways to WBLEs

## #5 ENTREPRENEURIAL EFFORTS

- **HOW CAN STUDENTS BE ENTREPRENEURS?**

- Lawn care
- Firewood
- Elder companionship
- Running errands
- Crafts
- Meal Prep
- Computer Work/ Graphic Design
- Eggs
- Childcare

- **RESOURCE FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES (Free Download):**

- *VentureLab* Child & Caregiver Workbook
  - <https://venturelab.org/parents/>
  - Features 60 activities that can be done over the course of a year, created around thirteen key concepts in entrepreneurial thinking

# BIG JOBS in Small Towns: 6 Ways to WBLEs

## #6 ONLINE WORK OPPORTUNITIES

- **WHAT KIND OF ONLINE WORK?**

- Data Entry/Clerical
- Video Editing/ Graphic Design
- Customer Service
- Transcription
- Social Media

# **BIG JOBS in Small Towns: 6 Ways to WBLEs MAKING IT HAPPEN & STEPS TO SUCCESS**

- **Review TAKING ACTION & ACTION STEPS chart/checklist.**
- **DEVELOP CLEAR & EXPLICIT JOB DUTIES for teacher & support staff involved (i.e. job coaches, paras, teacher assistants, transportation providers)**
- **USE VISUAL SUPPORTS**
- **SUPPORT THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE**
- **CONNECT THROUGH OTHER OPPORTUNITIES**

<b>TAKING ACTION &amp; ACTION STEPS TO SUCCESS IN WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES</b>	JS	S/D WBLE	COMM WBLE	SBE	ENTREP.	ONLINE
Create Policy & Procedure	X	X	X			
Recruit Opportunity/Create Work Guides	X	X	X			
Student Data Sheets (interest inventories, career goals, study focus areas, evaluations/rubrics for soft/work skills)	X	X	X			
Explore your school & community/Conduct Environmental Scan	X			X	X	X
Gain District/Campus level approval	X	X	X	X		
Teach soft-skills (i.e. communication, social skills, etc.)	X	X	X	X	X	
Teach grooming/dress/etiquette expectations	X	X	X	X	X	
Teach Technical Skills		X	X	X	X	X
Schedule Students for Activity	X	X	X			
Plan Logistics (Location, Marketing, Resources, Transportation)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Student Record-Keeping (IEP, school/district, other agency)				X	X	X

# **BIG JOBS in Small Towns: 6 Ways to WBLEs MAKING IT HAPPEN & STEPS TO SUCCESS**

- **DEVELOP CLEAR & EXPLICIT JOB DUTIES** for teacher, support staff (i.e. job coaches, paras, teacher assistants, transportation providers) and students involved by answering these questions **PRIOR** to the student beginning work:
  - **Who will train the student?**
  - **What level of support is needed?**
  - **Who will support with visual/word task reminders?**
  - **Who will create systems of support for routines?**
  - **Does the student know who to go to when they have a question?**
  - **Does the student know how to ask for a day off?**
  - **What is the procedure to call in?**

# **BIG JOBS in Small Towns: 6 Ways to WBLEs MAKING IT HAPPEN & STEPS TO SUCCESS**

- **USE VISUAL SUPPORTS:**

- **Provide words and pictures (visual supports)**
- **Provide step-by-step instructions/procedures/task analysis**
- **Teach students that EVERY task has a procedure (drive -thru, cashier, food prep, bussing)**
- **REMEMBER that routines and visual supports are the top supports for ALL individuals.**

# BIG JOBS in Small Towns: 6 Ways to WBLEs MAKING IT HAPPEN & STEPS TO SUCCESS

## • USE VISUAL SUPPORTS – EXAMPLES:

### Dining Room RESPONSIBILITIES

garbage floor tables  
stocking bathrooms windows

Completing these required tasks on a daily basis will keep the dining room in good shape for our customers at all times.

### Name Tag Job

This is a new job.  
Melody will show you the job.  
This is your checklist for the job.

1. Remove Paper from plastic holder
2. Put paper in blue bin
3. Put plastic holder in clear bin

### A Batch of BEANS

#### YOU WILL NEED

1 bag of beans

3 quarts of water

#### DIRECTIONS

(Current time)  
**2:00 PM**

pour water into the pan first, then add beans

Ready 2:45 PM  
Expire 6:45 PM

time pan of beans accordingly with a dry erase marker

Ready in 45 minutes from preparation. Expires 4 hours after ready time.

BEANS  
R 2:45 PM  
X 6:45 PM

place beans in heating cabinet

These are the steps that must be completed to make a batch of beans during a prep cycle.

# BIG JOBS in Small Towns: 6 Ways to WBLEs MAKING IT HAPPEN & STEPS TO SUCCESS

- **SUPPORT THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE** by focusing on how **opportunities connect to future goals:**
  - Focus on the student strengths and support the deficits.
  - Check -in often to problem solve with the student.
  - Check-in regularly with the employer to address areas of growth and recognize what are identified strengths.
  - Use peer mentoring/inclusive/unified activities

# **BIG JOBS in Small Towns: 6 Ways to WBLEs MAKING IT HAPPEN & STEPS TO SUCCESS**

## **➤ CONNECT THROUGH OTHER OPPORTUNITIES**

### **• VET ASSISTANT EXAMPLE**

- Animal Shelter
- Animal Adoption Center
- Pet Store (i.e. chain or local)
- Pet Department in Other Retail Setting (i.e. Atwood's)
- Local Veterinarian (i.e. DVM or DVR)
- Classes through ASPCA online
- Working toward Vet Assistant
- Groomer (i.e. chain or local)
- Side Gigs
  - Pet Sitting
  - Pet Walking
  - Pet Grooming
  - Pet Photos

# Elgin Public Schools: Growing Your Own Transition Programs

Nikki Ricks, Special Education Director

Shala Morita, Transition Teacher

# Elgin's Efforts to Plant Seeds & Grow their Transition Activities & Programs

Pre-ETs

Transition Nights

CBI

School Work Study

Work Adjustment Training



# **BUILDING TRANSITION PROGRAMS WITH AGENCIES & PARTNERS**

# Transition Program- Work Adjustment Training (WAT)

- Students may qualify for WAT if they have an individual plan for employment or IPE in place, and their school has an existing contract with the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services.
- The work adjustment training program is designed to prepare high school age youth **with the most significant disabilities** or equally significant barriers for competitive integrated employment in the community by developing important work habits, attitudes and personal and social adjustment skills.
- Work Adjustment Training — School provides work training curriculum to their students who are DRS clients recommended and approved for WAT (school is reimbursed for providing WAT curriculum to approved students)
- On-the-Job Work Training Program — designed to increase employment skills, overcome vocational barriers and provide work experiences in a community integrated setting with daily supervision, mentoring and supports.

# Transition Program- School Work Study (SWS)

- Students may qualify for SWS if they have an individual plan for employment or IPE in place, and their school has an existing contract with the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services.
- School Work Study — Work on or off school campus
- Work Site Learning — Work in the community as an employee of the school.

# How to Get Successful Outcomes

Department of Rehabilitation  
collaboration.

Encourage staff and parental involvement  
in the School-to-work program.

Administrators involved and supportive.

Being creative and flexible.

# Examples of Jobs for WAT and/or SWS (non-exhaustive list)

- Custodial in Bus Barn
- Dietary
- Manager of Sports Team
- Heating and Air Conditioning
- Teacher's Aid/Paraprofessional
- Nurse's Aid
- Security @ School (make badges)
- Clerk in School Store
- Assistant in Print Shop
- Daycare Assistant
- Stagehand for Drama Club
- Custodial in School or Any Building
- Custodial in cafeteria
- Library Aid
- Office Assistant, Counselor's Assistant, Admin Assistant
- Information Tech Assistant
- Landscape Maintenance
- Stocker- General Store (facing, fronting, zoning, etc)
- Mail Clerk
- Cleaning Stands at Sports Events
- Transportation Maintenance

# Getting Contract Process Started

Reaching out to teachers and administration to build collaboration to start transition and SWS.

Getting teachers involved in planning.

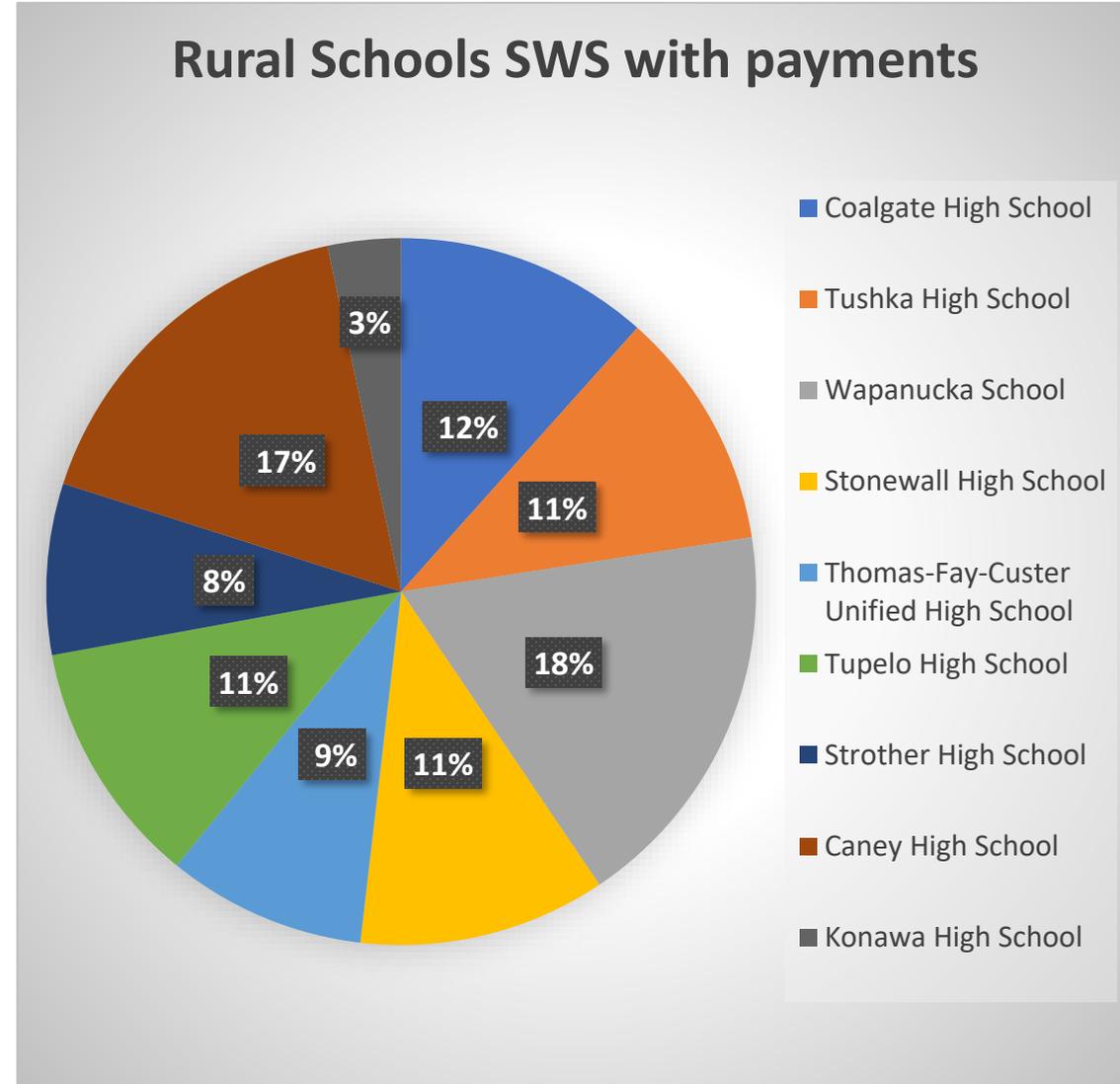
Meetings with administration and teachers to discuss signing of contract and DRS process.

## Additional SWS Topics

- DRS Application- how to get parent/student participation
  - Teachers should also hand out DRS brochures and applications at every IEP high school IEP meetings AND facilitate the application process for student/family!!!
- Getting Business Participation- we have a flyer to use

# Some Successful Rural Schools Using SWS

- Tushka High School 146 student's 9th-12<sup>th</sup>
  - 15 students participating in SWS
- Wapanucka High School 71 student's 9th-12<sup>th</sup>
  - 12 students participating in SWS
- Caney High School 51 student's 9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>
  - 8 students participating in SWS
- Konawa High School 160 student's 9th-12<sup>th</sup>
  - 5 students participating in SWS
- Coalgate High School 230 student's 9<sup>th</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup>
  - 25 students participating in SWS
- Strother High School 109 student's 9th-12<sup>th</sup>
  - 8 students participating in SWS
- Stonewall High School 104 student's 9th-12<sup>th</sup>
  - 11 students participating in SWS
- Thomas-Fay-Custer High School 76 student's 9th-12<sup>th</sup>
  - 8 students participating in SWS



High School student enrollment from [www.publicschoolreview.com](http://www.publicschoolreview.com) for 2022-2023.

SWS Data numbers reported from Department of Rehabilitation Services Data from January 1, 2022-Present.

# Quote From Parent

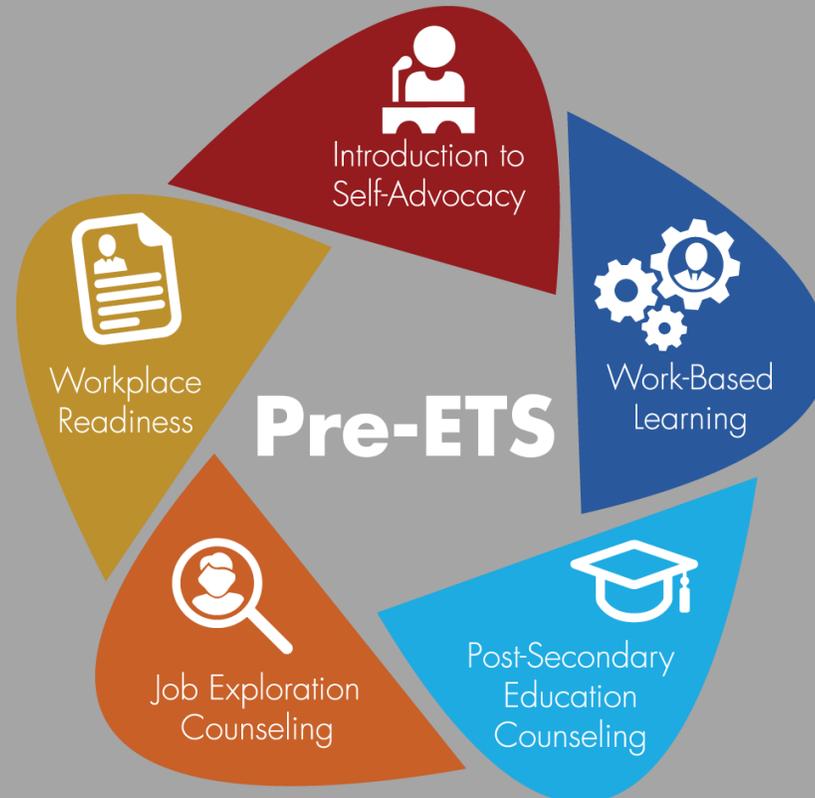
- “The Department of Rehabilitative Services program has been such a blessing. Living in an area with few opportunities for my students, the school to work program has provided a wealth of resources for them. Students have been given chances to work in places, through this program, that they would not have been able to work, otherwise. Employers have seen the work ethic, skills, and dedication these students have brought to the workplace, and many have been hired through that business.”
  - Coalgate parent



# Pre-ETS

A **coordinated** set of **activities/lessons** to assist students with a documented disability, ages, 14-21, with resources to assist with transition from high-school to post secondary training/education or employment upon graduation.

Free!!!



5-Key Elements  
of PreETS

# Pre-ETS Services



- Activities reinforce current transition focus/lessons being delivered in the classroom
- Activities can be delivered in small groups or individually
- Activities are individualized based on the student's interest and transition goals
- Activities can be provided during ESY

# For more information on Pre-ETS contact:



Judi Goldston  
Sr. Program Manager  
University of Oklahoma  
National Center for Disability  
Education and Training  
[jgoldston@ou.edu](mailto:jgoldston@ou.edu)

Questions?



# RESOURCES

- Pre-ETS Training Fact Sheet: [pre ets fact sheet fy216.pdf \(ou.edu\)](#)
- ODRS Home Page: [Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services \(805\)](#)
  - ODRS Transition Page: [Transition \(oklahoma.gov\)](#)
  - ODRS Transition Newsletter: [Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services \(govdelivery.com\)](#)
  - ODRS Office Locator for High School Students: [Office Locator for High School Students | OKDRS](#)
  - ODRS Transition Planning High School Folder: [Transition Planning High School Folder | OKDRS \(oklahoma.gov\)](#)
  - ODRS Transition School-to-Work Youth Brochure: [Transition School-to-Work Youth brochure \(oklahoma.gov\)](#)
  - ODRS Transition School-to-Work Checklist: [Transition: School-to-Work Checklist for Ages 14-22 \(oklahoma.gov\)](#)
  - ODRS Transition Progress Sheet: [Transition Progress \(oklahoma.gov\)](#)
  - ODRS SWS/WAT Card: [Transition School Work Study/Work Adjustment Training card \(oklahoma.gov\)](#)

# For More Information

Please contact:

- Renee Sansom Briscoe [rsansom@okdrs.gov](mailto:rsansom@okdrs.gov)
- Stacey Dutton [sdutton@okdrs.gov](mailto:sdutton@okdrs.gov)
- Lori Chesnut [Lori.Chesnut@sde.ok.gov](mailto:Lori.Chesnut@sde.ok.gov)
- Claudia Beckner [Claudia.Beckner@sde.ok.gov](mailto:Claudia.Beckner@sde.ok.gov)
- Nikki Ricks [nricks@elginps.net](mailto:nricks@elginps.net)
- Shala Morita [smorita@elginps.net](mailto:smorita@elginps.net)